SIZE

Size, like wealth, is only relative. The farmer who owns a hundred acres appears rich to the laborer whom he employs to cut his wheat; but many a millionaire spends in one month as much as would purchase two such farms. The earth seems great to us, and the sun still greater; but doubtless there are suns the diameter of which is equal to the distance from the earth to the sun, in which both earth and sun would be swallowed up as mere drops in an ocean of fire. In the animal kingdom there are vast disparities in size, and these disparities are revealed in the lower as well as in the higher classes. In the class of mammals we find tiny mice and great elephants; in the insect world we find beetles which are microscopic in size, and, not distantly related to them, beetles as large as a clenched fist. The disparity between a field-mouse and a sulphur-bottomed whale is no greater than the disparity in size which exists between the smallest and the largest of the beetle tribe. And so it is with the lepidoptera. It would take several thousands of the Pygmy Blue, *Lyccena exilis*, to equal in weight one of the great bird-wing butterflies of the Australian tropics. The greatest disparity in size in the order of the lepidoptera is not, however, shown in the butterflies, but among the moths. There are moths the wings of which do not cover more than three sixteenths of an inch in expanse, and there are moths with great bulky bodies and wings spreading from eight to nine inches. It would require ten thousand of the former to equal in weight one of the latter, and the disproportion in size is as great as that which exists between a shrew and a hippopotamus, or between a minnow and a basking-shark.

It is said that, taking the sulphur-bottomed whale as the representative of the most colossal development of flesh and

blood now existing on land or in the sea, and then with the microscope reaching down into the realm of protozoan life, the common blow-fly will be ascertained to occupy the middle point on the descending scale. Man is, therefore, not only mentally, but even physically, a great creature, though he stands sometimes amazed at what he regards as the huge proportions of other creatures belonging to the vertebrates.